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Genl. W. Fox
in presence of J. G. Barnard

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

AT THE

SHEFFIELD

CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION,

June 18th, 1876.

BY GENERAL J. G. BARNARD.



SHEFFIELD.

1876.

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HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

BY GEN. JOHN G. BARNARD.

On this festival occasion you have called upon me for a sketch of the local history which prompts and makes appropriate this our own peculiar "Centennial" celebration. Although a native, "to the manner born," I feel myself but slightly qualified for the task. The theme is not the growth, development, and struggles for existence of a nation; it is of a simple country village, whose "fields" have ever been those of the husbandman, freely visited, indeed, by the dews of heaven, but unstained by the red drops of war; whose harvests wave not

"O'er roots set deep in battle-graves;"

whose modest halls have never resounded with the eloquence of statesmen, nor been the scenes where the nation's destiny was at stake.

Not that we are without history; that there is not, for ourselves at least, much worthy to be recorded. But he who would worthily make that record should be not only one *born* amongst you, but *reared* in your midst; to whom the color of your local life has been imparted; to whom the history of each family has been associated with his own personal history; and to whom the local events which must form his theme have become traditional. These are qualifications which he who addresses you, cannot claim to possess. Removed from this his "boyhood's home" almost in childhood, his youth and manhood have been spent in regions far away. His way of life, his pursuits, and his associations, have had little in them to remind him—much to cause forgetfulness—of the home where he was born. He is still, though nominally a citizen, almost a stranger among you. He must claim your indulgence, therefore, and beg you to accept the will to show his sympathy with you for ability to do better.

For the approaching national anniversary, the great events of our national history form fitting themes. We must content ourselves with others which, though humbler, are not un instructive.

"O Hist'ry, thou hast done the world a wrong
Immeuse and mournful; on the Alpine heights
Of human greatness thine enamoured gaze
Has lingered, mindless, in that partial mood,
Of silent virtue in the vale below;
And robed thy themes of darkness with a veil
Of bright attractions, as the thunder wraps
His ruin oft, in clouds of glorious spell."

We, dwellers of the vale, literally as well as figuratively, must turn our eyes from our historic mountain summits, and fix them upon the "silent virtues" which have never been lacking in our valley home. *Our own* history, as a community, must be our special theme; and to those who think of history as taking origin in the obscurity of an indefinite past, the fact that *our* origin as a town is dated but one half century previous to the event we commemorate, is indeed startling. One hundred and fifty years ago the ground where we now stand was a wilderness. It was not till the Pilgrim Fathers had established themselves (1620 and 1622) in Plymouth, and on the shores of Massachusetts Bay; nor until "the fame of Connecticut river, a long, fresh, rich river, which had made a little Nilus of it in the expectation of the good people of Massachusetts Bay," had prompted an emigration and a new settlement upon this famous river; not until this settlement (1636) had been more than four-score years extending itself along the beautiful valley of the Connecticut, did the time ripen for an incursion upon the wilderness of Berkshire.

"On the 30th day of January, 1722, one hundred and seventy-six inhabitants of Hampshire county * petitioned the General Court for two townships of land situated on the Housatonic river, at the southwestern corner of the Massachusetts patent. The petition was granted, and the townships ordered to contain seven miles square each. John Stoddard, Ebenezer Pomeroy, and Henry Dwight, of Northampton; Luke Hitchcock, of Springfield; John Ashley, of Westfield; and Samuel Porter, of Hadley, were appointed a committee for dividing the tract, granting lots, admitting settlers, etc. The committee was instructed to reserve lands for the first minister, for the subsequent maintenance of the ordinances of the Gospel, and for the support of schools, and to demand of each man to whom they should make a grant, thirty shillings for every hundred acres, to be expended in extinguishing the Indian claims, paying expenses for laying out the lands, and in building meeting-houses in the townships. This committee met in the following March, at Springfield, and fifty-five settlers received grants, complying with the conditions attached to them. Measures were taken to purchase the land of the Indians, and on the 25th of April, 1724, a deed was executed by them, conveying a tract bounded on the south by the divisional line between Massachusetts and Connecticut, west by the colony of New York, eastward to a line four miles from the Housatonic river, and in a general way so to extend, and north 'to the great mountain.' The Indians made certain reservations of planting and other land, and received, in consideration, the sum of £460 in money, three barrels of cider, and thirty quarts of rum. * * *

* Hampshire county then included the entire valley of the Connecticut river lying in Massachusetts

This would seem to be the largest sum ever paid in Western Massachusetts for the extinguishment of an Indian title. The deed thus given embraced the present towns of Sheffield, Egremont, Mount Washington, Great Barrington, Alford, a considerable part of Lee, and the larger part of Stockbridge and West Stockbridge. These two townships were known before the later division into towns, as 'the upper and lower Housatonic townships.'

"The original settlers of Sheffield numbered about sixty. The first was Obadiah Noble, of Westfield, who spent one winter there entirely alone, or with no other companions than the Indians. Returning to Westfield in the spring, he started in June to resume his residence upon the Housatonic, taking with him his daughter, only sixteen years of age. She went on horseback, taking her bed upon the horse with her, and lodged one night in the wilderness while making the passage.

"Though the Indian settlement in lower Housatonic was very small, it did not comprise all the natives within the territory granted. The tribe, however, was very much reduced in numbers, and Konkapot, the chief, of whom the land was bought, with eight or ten families, lived in that part of the territory of upper Housatonic, now covered by Stockbridge. The minority lived on the reservation in the lower township already alluded to, called by them 'Skatehook.'" (Holland's History of Western Massachusetts.)

Such is the history of the settlement of the town, and of Southern Berkshire, on the Housatonic. We find that, of the two townships authorized by the General Court, in 1722, the lower one was incorporated in January, 1733, with the name of the more famous English town of Sheffield. Doubtless among the early settlers there must have been some for whom the name had suggestions other than those so familiar of penknives and table cutlery. To some of our progenitors it must have had those of a *home*, or at least have been associated with tender memories of the "fatherland."

"Within the territory of our *new* Sheffield, in accordance with the order of the Legislature, there had been reserved a lot for the first settled minister, a lot for the ministry, and a lot for schools. Obadiah Noble was, as we have noted, the first settler; among those who soon followed him (mostly from Westfield) were the bearers of the following names: Austin, Ashley, Westover, Kellogg, Eggleston, Pell, Callender, Corben, Huggins, Smith, Ingersoll, Dewey and Root," many of which are still familiar and honored names among us.

That of John Ashley has already appeared as that of one of the original grantees, or committee-men. Sheffield has had several prominent men of this name. John Ashley, son of the above, an ancestor of the speaker, graduated at Yale in 1730; settled in Sheffield as a lawyer; subsequently

a judge, colonel of militia, and magistrate, he died in Sheffield, 1802, aged ninety-three years. General John Ashley, his son, died 1799, aged sixty-four years, appointed by Governor Hancock, Major-General of State Militia, in 1780; he, too, was one of the largest land-holders of the town. It was he who commanded the small party which met and defeated the "Shays' rebels," in the first and only actual fight of that rebellion, near the western boundary of Sheffield. Col. William Ashley succeeded to the paternal estates of his father, and sustained the honored name which is now forever perpetuated in the cognomen, "Ashley Falls," by which the region is known where the family resided, and where their estates lay. Last in the male line, he died in Sheffield, 1849, aged seventy-six years.

The original bounds of Sheffield embraced a large portion of what is now Great Barrington, and portions, also, of Egremont and New Marlboro. At the second town-meeting (the first having been held January 16), January 30, 1733, money was raised to build a meeting-house, forty-five feet long, and thirty-five feet wide (Appendix 1). The house was erected about three-quarters of a mile north of the present edifice and was occupied until 1760, when a new house was built, sixty feet by forty feet. This house is the one in which we are now assembled, having been removed, altered, and improved, in 1820, and again in 1856, renovated and embellished. Rev. Jonathan Hubbard was settled as the first pastor, October 22, 1735, and on the same day the first church was organized (Appendix 2). Mr. Hubbard was a native of Sunderland, and a graduate of Yale in 1724. He died July 6, 1765. Rev. John Keep, of Longmeadow, a graduate of Yale in 1769, succeeded him on June 10, 1772, and died while in office, September 3, 1785. Rev. Ephraim Judson was installed in his place in May, 1786. He was a native of Woodbury, Connecticut, and a graduate of Yale in 1763. He died in office, February 23, 1813, and was succeeded on the following 13th of October by Rev. James Bradford, a native of Rowley, and a graduate of Dartmouth. Mr. Bradford remained the pastor of the church until May, 1852. Until 1825, the town and Congregational Society were one and the same in action, but in that year the society became a separate organization. A Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1842. A second Methodist society was organized at Ashley Falls. In 1866 the Rev. Mr. Eccleston, then Rector of St. James's Episcopal Church, Great Barrington, undertook to organize a mission chapel to that church in our village. In this he received aid and encouragement from the late Mr. A. C. Russell, of Great Barrington, to whom is due the credit of being a founder of the Episcopal Church in Sheffield. In 1867 the church was incorporated, and in 1873 admitted into the diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Massachusetts.

The specific act on the part of our town, which furnishes the motive for this, our own Sheffield Centennial celebration, is found thus recorded :

“ At a legal town-meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Sheffield, on Tuesday, the 18th day of June, 1776, it was put to vote, whether the inhabitants of the said town of Sheffield, should the Honorable Continental Congress, in their wisdom, think prudent and for the interest and safety of the American Colonies to declare said Colonies independent of the kingdom of Great Britton, they, the inhabitants of said Sheffield, will solemnly engage, with their lives and fortunes, to support them in their measures. Voted in the affirmative; two dissenting only.”

The famous “Mecklenburg” (N. C.) Declaration of Independence, which resolved that “we, the people of Mecklenburg county, do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us with the mother country,” though so explicit in form, does not appear to have been “designed for publicity, other than such as might be obtained by its presentation to Congress.” In fact a “dissolution of the bands which have connected us with the mother country,” by a single county of a few thousand inhabitants, would be preposterous. The Mecklenburg declaration has no claim to be regarded as anything more decisive or more patriotic than were the Sheffield resolutions; the intended and the sole effect of the one and the other being to encourage the General Congress with assurance of support, should it, in its wisdom, take the decisive step towards which, as all patriots and thoughtful men saw, the march of events plainly teuded. I know not whether any other communities of the thirteen colonies acted likewise; but *we* claim that whatever just meed of applause may be conceded to the patriots of Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, should be conceded equally to the patriots of Sheffield, Massachusetts.

Though necessarily introduced as the especial theme of this paper, this action of the town of Sheffield was by no means an isolated one. Even more remarkable is the action (preamble and resolutions) of January 12, 1773, antecedent by more than two years to the Mecklenburg Declaration, and in the first and second resolutions, viz. :—

“Resolved, that mankind, in a state of nature, are equal, free, and independent of each other, and have a right to the undisturbed enjoyment of their lives, their liberty and property.

“Resolved, that the great end of political society is to secure in a more effectual manner those rights and privileges wherewith God and Nature have made us free”—anticipating the famed enunciation of “truths,” held to be “self-evident,” of the Declaration of Independence. Too lengthy to be read here, the record is copied in an appendix to this paper (Appendix 3). The list of the names of the committee-men who

drafted the preamble and resolutions, will furnish a clue, perhaps, to their remarkable character.

Theodore Sedgwick, then a lawyer in Sheffield, represented the town several years in the Massachusetts Legislature; was a member of the Continental Congress, 1785-86; member of the State Convention for ratification of the Federal Constitution, 1788; member of Congress (at one time Speaker), and a Senator under that Constitution; subsequently Judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts till his death, in 1813. It was he who, first as a lawyer, then as a judge, settled forever the question of slavery in Massachusetts. Chairman of a committee—as we find him to be not only on this, but on subsequent occasions—of an obscure country town, he was afterwards the intimate associate of Hamilton, Jay, Rutledge, and other prominent men of our early history.

Major John Fellows, an ancestor of the speaker, had served in the French war, and, as brigadier-general, served afterwards in the Revolution, on Long Island, at White Plains, and in the battle of Stillwater. "Col. Ashley" has already been alluded to as "General John Ashley." Stephen Dewey, Dr. Lemuel Barnard, Dr. Silas Kellogg, and others of the names, are those of men of known intellectual capacity.

By the resolution of June 18, 1776, we, in advance, pledged, virtually, "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor," to the support of the great act of July 4, 1776. Nor did we fail to fulfil this anticipatory pledge. On June 30, 1777, the first town-meeting was called in the name of the government and people of Massachusetts Bay. "Dr. Lemuel Barnard was chosen moderator; Theodore Sedgwick, Richard Jacob, and Col. Aaron Root, were chosen a committee to give instructions to the representatives (in the General Court) relative to the money raised for the soldiers that turn out or are drafted to go in an allarm" (*sic*). It was voted that "each non-commissioned officer and private who shall march by reason of allarm until the — day of October, shall receive two shillings per day while on the march, and one shilling per day while in camp, in addition to the present Continental and Government pay."

The following minute appears of proceedings at a meeting on January 9, 1778, Theodore Sedgwick moderator:—"To William Bacon, Esq., one of the representatives for the towns which are to attend the present sessions of the Great and General Court, this town, impressed with a sence (*sic*) of the necessity of an immediate ratification of the articles of confederation and perpetual union, published by order of the Honorable the Congress, highly approving the wisdom of these articles, instruct you to use your influence, that the same be approved in the House of Representatives of this State."

March 17, 1778, we find the minute of a vote to raise "the sum of five hundred pounds, in money, to get a town stock of powder, lead, and

flints." It was also voted to "supply the souldiers in the Continental service belonging to this town with cloathing during the present year; also, that the committee chosen to provide for the families of those souldiers gone into the Continental service, be directed to make such provision for their cattle as they think necessary." And again, May 16, 1778, "voted that there be allowed the sum of thirty pounds to each Continental souldier that shall be raised in this town, agreeable to the resolve of the General Court of April 20th;" and December 3, 1778, "voted to raise the sum of five hundred pounds, to provide for the families of this town in the Continental army" (*sic*).

November 25, 1779, it was voted, after hearing a report from a committee of which Theodore Sedgwick was chairman, that "two thousand and four hundred pounds is equivalent to one hundred pounds." (This was in reference to fixing, in depreciated currency, the salary of their pastor, Rev. John Keep.)

January 16, 1780, it was "voted to choose a committee to hire the cota (*sic*) of men required by the General Court" * * * "to give those who shall go into the Continental service for six months (in addition to the State's pay), forty shillings per month, in silver, or Continental money equivalent" * * * "To raise three hundred pounds silver money." From these items we infer that Sheffield's "cota" of men that year was 150.

October 13, 1780, it was "voted to raise the sum of three hundred and fifty pounds, new emission, to purchase beef for the army," etc., etc. * * * "To raise the sum of one hundred and forty pounds, to procure cloathing for the souldiers in the Continental army," etc.

The records all through the war are filled with such votes. Men were only raised for three or six months, and were clothed by the town—facts illustrative of the difficulties which our generals in the field had to encounter.

In 1780, the first town-meeting was called "in the name of the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Bay;" in the succeeding year, and subsequently, the time-honored word, "Bay," disappears, and the style becomes the "Commonwealth of Massachusetts" (Appendix 4).

The foregoing brief notes must suffice to show how prompt, throughout the Revolutionary struggle, the town of Sheffield was to meet every patriotic call; how faithful the pledge—the act which we this day celebrate—was fulfilled, "to support the Continental Congress in a Declaration of Independence" (Appendix 5).

Passing along these records, we find, as the war draws to a close (practically decided by the surrender at Yorktown, October, 1781; though the Treaty of Peace was not signed till September, 1783), minutes of quite another character, grave and ominous—as we can *now* understand

them to have been—as are the atmospheric phenomena which prelude the earthquake. On the 1st of April, 1782, it was

“Resolved, that in a Commonwealth to suspend the laws, and to stop the courts of justice, is of most fatal tendency to that County and ought by all means to be discountenanced by every one who wishes to support the liberties and happiness of the people.

“2dly, Resolved, that in the opinion (*sic*) of the town, the Justice of the Peace ought not to be allowed any fee for attending the Court of General Sessions of the Peace.

“3dly, Resolved, that the Governor’s salary, as by law established, is, in the opinion of this town, excessive.

“4thly, Resolved, that in the opinion of this town, it is in the power of the Legislature of the Commonwealth to devise and establish a less expensive and more speedy method of collecting debts, particularly by enlarging the jurisdiction of justices, and enabling them to take acknowledgment of debts without process, and issue execution thereon under such restrictions and provisions as may appear necessary.

“5thly, Resolved, that the price by law established is excessive, and that no travel nor attendance ought to be taxed on bills of cost more than is actually performed.

“6thly, Resolved, that in the opinion of the town, good pork, beef, and wheat, should be a tensure (*sic*) in satisfaction of executions, in like manner as is provided in case of extending executions on real estate.

“7thly, Resolved, that Constables ought to be empowered to serve all writs and processes within their respective towns.”

The foregoing resolutions were transmitted with the following petition :

“To the Honorable, the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,

“The petition of the inhabitants of the town of Sheffield, in town-meeting assembled, humbly shows,

“That the town, on mature and thorough deliberation and examination, have passed the several votes contained in the annexed copy ; we are sensible that your honours must, as a principle object, regard the defence of this and the other states in union ; we wish not to direct your attention therefore (from ?) a single moment, but while your patriotic exertions are pointed to a matter of such great importance we hope it may not be thought either impertinent or unreasonable to call the attention of your honours to the Internal Police of the Commonwealth ; we can and do most solemnly assure your honours that we have a just detestation of all practices which have a tendency to unsettle the Government, and introduce anarchy and confusion in its stead, as necessarily and directly tending to destroy the liberties of the citizen, and as aiding the most barbarous and bloody enemies of these states ; at the same time, we beg permission to say that we ardently wish the Government as little burdensome and expensive as is consistent with the support and dignity thereof ; accordingly, by these views, with the most submissive deference, we pray your Honours to take into your consideration the resolves and votes aforesaid, and act therein as to you in your wisdom shall appear just and reasonable, and your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.”

Real sufferings, and, to some extent, real grievances, the nature of which is clearly indicated in the above-cited resolutions, were thus early finding voice.

It will not be my province to dilate upon that peculiar phase of our history which the ensuing years of 1783-4-5-6-7, developed. The "Shays' Rebellion" is the subject of a chapter of Holland's "History of Western Massachusetts," and one of our most prominent townsmen, the Rev. Mason Noble, has recited to you the sad tale, as it relates more especially to Berkshire county and to Sheffield. I must content myself with quoting his eloquent epitome of its causes:—

"During the war of the Revolution the thirteen States had agreed upon articles of confederation, but they conferred little power on Congress. It could recommend, but could not enforce that which it recommended. It could only advise action, leaving the States to do as they pleased. Bitter jealousy existed between the several States, both with regard to each other, and to the general good. A heavy debt had been incurred by the war. Congress had no money, and could not levy taxes. It advised the States to pay, but some of them were too jealous of Congress to heed its recommendations. Massachusetts, however, true to her honorable record from first to last, assumed her own share of the national obligation of the States which, though not yet a nation, had together undertaken to secure independence of all from the English dominion.

"At the same time the land was in a terrible condition. Commerce had been utterly destroyed by the war. Trade, manufactures, and agriculture had been neglected. War had been the main business of the country for eight years. Many persons lost their entire fortunes. Villages, towns, and cities had been burned; ships had been lost; crops had been destroyed; money was worth almost nothing, still it was scarce and hard to get. A mighty load of debt rested on the nation, states, towns, and individuals, and, taking the land through, few were ready to do anything for the general relief. A shock was needed to wake the land to energetic life, and that shock came in the shape of what is known in history as 'Shays' Rebellion.'"

Berkshire, as we know, was the most recently settled county of Massachusetts, and the evils thus depicted bore heavily upon her. Yet, though there were numerous active coöperators in the county, it was around Northampton, Springfield, and Worcester, chiefly, that the rebellious gatherings were found, aimed mainly at preventing the sessions and action of the courts.

In Sheffield, you are aware, was the "battlefield" of the only actual fight, and, if we except the loss of life accompanying the attempt made by Shays on the arsenal at Springfield, the only scene of bloodshed. The "only instance" (according to Holland) "in which a considerable body

of rebels exhibited the slightest courage;" a courage, however, which he is malicious enough to attribute to "the quantity of liquor they had stolen and drank during the day."

The establishment of the constitution of the United States, and the remodelling of our State government, tended to restore confidence and quiet. The return of malcontents to habits of industry, the natural increase of population and the development of our physical resources, gradually obliterated all traces of these disorders. With peace, prosperity resumed its reign; our State and our county, rapidly increasing in population and in wealth, have been, conspicuously, the scenes of those busy activities in commerce, agriculture, manufactures, and in engineering works auxiliary thereto, which have been, during the latter half of the century, so characteristic of our country.

We need not dwell on the episode of our national history, the war of 1812,—a war which found little favor in New England, and in which our town seems to have had no further part than in sending its quota of militia to Boston, in 1814. An invasion of the coast was apprehended; but forty days of camp life at Dorchester, a review by the governor on Boston Common, and, on the whole, an "extremely pleasant time" for our militiamen, made up the events of this so-called "Governor Strong's war."

It is the sentiment of the country that this Centennial of our national existence should be especially a new era of restored fellowship and brotherly feeling with those of our countrymen with whom we were, in its penultimate decade, in so deadly a struggle. Long years myself a resident among those with whom we were subsequently to join battle, the "better half" of my feelings has been with some of those who live south of Mason and Dixon's line, and I am little disposed to recall, on this occasion, events of the war.

But I cannot omit some notice of the historic relations of my native town to this war. Her records show with how much patriotism and earnestness she demeaned herself.

"1861, May 4, Oliver Peck, moderator, W. B. Saxton, town clerk (E. E. Callender, Abner Roys, and Henry Burtch, were selectmen throughout the war), voted that the moderator and town clerk petition the governor, in behalf of the town, to immediately assemble the legislature. On motion of E. F. Ensign, a resolution passed at a legal meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Sheffield, held on the 18th of June, 1776, was read, and ordered to be put on file." This, the resolution we this day commemorate, was thus recalled and recorded anew,—an example of the patriotism of our fathers; an incentive to our own, in this new crisis of our country's fate. A committee (Graham A. Root, E. F. Ensign, Zacheus Candee, Archibald Taft, and Leonard Tuttle) were chosen, to report a series of resolutions." They reported, 1st, \$2,000 to be raised to

equip volunteers from this town; 2d, each volunteer to be paid \$9 per month by the town; 3d, families of soldiers to receive "comfortable assistance;" 4th, G. A. Root, S. H. Bushnell, L. Tuttle, T. B. Strong and H. D. Train, to be a committee, with full powers to expend the money; 5th, said committee may borrow not exceeding \$4,000 on the credit of the town; 6th, the committee to serve without pay; 7th, the town-treasurer shall pay all orders of said committee; 8th, the committee were "to proceed immediately to form a militia company." The resolutions were adopted *with one* dissenting vote.

1862, July 22, voted a bounty to each volunteer of \$125. A committee of fourteen, "to solicit enlistments, and subscriptions of money to be given volunteers."

August 23, voted a bounty of \$100 to each nine months' volunteer.

November 4, \$2,000 for aid to soldiers' families. 1864, April 4, a bounty of \$150, and to raise \$3,000 for this purpose. December 13, raised \$4,000.

The town carried the spirit, shown in the resolutions adopted at the beginning of the war, through the entire struggle, and, at its close, passed a vote of thanks to the selectmen, who declined a reelection, for their services in procuring recruits.

Sheffield furnished 269 men for the military service—a surplus of eight over all demands. Four were commissioned officers. The whole amount of money raised for war purposes, during the five years, was \$30,033 68, besides the "State aid" to the families of volunteers, which was afterwards reimbursed by the Commonwealth, and which was, in 1861, \$80 36; 1862; \$1,867 56; 1863, \$4,859 71; 1864, \$4,300; 1865, \$3,400. Total amount, \$14,507 63. Total raised, \$44,541 31.

No town in the State failed to raise its full quota of men, and only two in our county failed to raise *more* than their quota; but no town can claim to have been more prompt, energetic, and liberal, than Sheffield.

I have thus hastily sketched our origin, growth and history; but how unsatisfactory must necessarily be a mere historical sketch! How little can we realize who and what they were—our *fathers*, indeed—who lived, in 1776, where *we* now live! The word "*father*" carries us back to the time when we were children, and when we looked up into parental eyes with a tenderness and reverence with which it is not in us to regard other mortal being. Were those who lived here—and, save through those words and deeds we find record of, so utterly unknown to us—indeed our "fathers after the flesh"? Does the brief century of years which lays in the dust all who have gone before us, and who have *begotten* us, thus dissolve *all* ties? Are we indeed children *of the dead*, as we are ourselves heirs to death? To Him, the "God of our fathers," who proclaims Himself not the God of the dead but *of the living*, we must appeal for answer!

But, leaving aside these grave questions, how inexpressibly interesting it would be if, as we chance to pass one of the few remaining quaint old-time houses, destitute in front of porch and piazza, sloping back with its long rearward roof from two stories down to one ; or, perchance, one of the double-fronted old brick houses, with the numerals of a long-past year curiously worked into its front walls, we might enter and find there their vanished dwellers *as they were !*

Were they, indeed, those grim old " Puritans," of whom we have heard so much ; and who, though they landed on " Plymouth Rock," and

" Shook the depths of the forest gloom with hymns of lofty cheer,"

do not, altogether, make us feel as if we should be at ease in their company ? Our narrative shows them to have been real live men—*keenly* alive to the sense of injustices and oppressions,—self-sacrificing in their efforts to remove them, and actively benevolent in behalf of those who were in need of succor. But, as if we needed a little of *our own* " human nature," to assure us that they were of our flesh and blood, the story of a " Shays' Rebellion," bad as it is, comes in aptly, if not agreeably.

Holland tells us, too, that, " in social life, ardent spirits played an important part. Respectable traders dealt out the article to very miserable toppers ; respectable men assembled, even on Sunday evenings, in the parlor of the village tavern, to drink flip and smoke their pipes ; respectable young men went forth in sleighing parties, stopping at every tavern for their flip, and boys drank flip by the hour, in bar-rooms of respectable members of the Church. Then, Sunday night was the night for play among the children, Saturday night being observed as holy time. They pursued their noisy games in the street, or assembled in neighboring houses to play blindman's buff and tell stories."

That there *was* a long period in our early history during which the evils of the free use of " ardent spirits " had not been adequately recognized, all of us whose memories extend back fifty years, can vouch. The use of ardent spirits was doubtless then, as it is now, quite too common, and Holland is but truthful when he says, " Respectable traders dealt out the article to very miserable toppers ;" but I doubt whether there was ever a time when " *boys* drank flip by the hour," in bar-rooms of respectable innkeepers, whether members of the Church or not. Fifty years ago it was rather unusual to find an innkeeper to be a " member of the Church ;" not because they were not " respectable," but because of the peculiar attributes of church-membership in New England.

It was in the early years of the century that " temperance societies " first originated. It is, indeed, only within that brief period that men have become fully conscious of the fearful evils which accompany the

use of ardent spirits; nowhere were the evils earlier recognized than in New England. The earliest "temperance society" originated (1808) in a region bordering on our own (Saratoga County, N. Y.). Five years later (1813) the Massachusetts Society for the suppression of intemperance was formed. Affiliated societies were rapidly organized throughout the State, and travelling preachers, or lecturers, went forth with the theme on their lips. They are many among us who can remember the first appearance of these excellent men, and the telling effect of their appeals; one of the most common of which was the computation of the number of ships which could be floated in the liquor annually drank. The speaker well recollects that *one* "respectable trader" went his way homeward, after such an appeal, vowing to stave the heads of his "wine" casks, and let *his* tributary rill flow to mother earth, rather than to that imaginary lake which floated the navies of the world,—that too real maelström in which were being engulfed the noblest ventures of our life's enterprise, the fairest promise of our New-England homes. The speaker is sorry to add that he has not reason to believe this virtuous resolution was carried into effect; he has rather reason to fear that it served but to form another *tessera* of pavement for that place where "good intentions" are said to be trampled under foot (Appendix 6).

Although that extreme rigidity of Sabbath observance, maintained by penal enactments, of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay did not obtain in the latest Massachusetts settlement, Berkshire, yet those of us whose memories extend back to the mediæval period of the past century, will recollect the extreme strictness of observance alluded to by Holland.

The commandment given to the children of Israel was *absolute*, and it was addressed to a people for whom its absolute observance was *practicable*. Such an observance is simply impracticable among the nations of the earth, as human relations and avocations are now constituted; but the Almighty never commanded an impracticable thing, nor laid an absolute injunction upon man that he, his creature, should define to it exceptions.

"When will the Sabbath be over?" was, if not on our lips, the yearning thought, as Sunday's sun went down, of many a boyish heart fifty years ago; not that, with the mercenary Jews, "we may sell wheat;" not that we may resume our work; but that we boys, released from unnatural restriction, may once more, at least, *play*.

On such an occasion as this, personal reminiscences of early days might be deemed appropriate; but the most far-reaching memory among us extends little beyond the mid-period of the century just ended, and there are not many to whom the "brick school-house" (many years since demolished), with its quaint curb-roof,—nor its successive teachers, are familiar reminiscences. One of these, a venerable lady, for whom there

are yet many to "arise up and call her blessed," is still living, though not among us. Another, a somewhat famous pedagogue, came here in the decline of his powers, physical and mental, but, nevertheless, many of Sheffield's since-noted men (among whom my friends, Judge Bradford and Mr. Ensign Kellogg, now of Pittsfield) were, as was the speaker, his pupils, deriving profit from his teaching.

There are, perhaps, a few present who recollect this "meeting-house," as it stood in the middle of the street, and its removal and remodelling (1820) to its present site and form. But *many* here present will recollect the commanding form of the last of our sole Congregational pastors, the Rev. James Bradford, whose flock comprised *all* the inhabitants (for, until 1825, the town and the Congregational society were one and the same),—one of the last of that remarkable race of New-England divines who were so influential in moulding, so potent in maintaining, our peculiar New-England institutions. "*Requiescant in pace,*" be our invocation; "Well done, good and faithful servants," be their greeting from the Master whom, according to their light and might, they so faithfully served.

In one respect, Sheffield is unlike those towns of our State and country which are most typical of the growth of the nation. Quite destitute of water-power—nearly the only portion of the Housatonic valley which is thus destitute—and, until the opening of the Housatonic railroad (1840), almost cut off from communication with the great cities—the social and commercial centres—Sheffield has remained an *eddy* in the sweeping current of what we call our national progress. We have had but small addition from without to our population. A community of farmers we were; a community of farmers we remain. Since the opening of railroad communications, the upper towns of the Housatonic valley have been much resorted to, by inhabitants of New York and Boston, for summer residence and for sites of country seats, while our own town has been passed by, mainly because the broad plain, in the midst of which is our village, presents not, contiguous to the population, those view-commanding sites which are found hard by the more northern towns of the Berkshire valley. With the highest peak of the Taconic range, the *Dome*, or "High Peak" of our boyhood—improperly called "Mount Everett" on recent maps, in consequence of an unauthorized and uncalled-for innovation of the late Professor Hitchcock—overlooking us on the west; the picturesque Hoosacs bordering our valley on the east; the sinuous silvery thread of the Housatonic laid along the intervening breadth of green meadows, the broad expanse of which is broken by numerous beautiful wooded monticles; with our excursions to the mountains, to "Bash-a-pish," to the "Twin Lakes," to the "Pool," and numerous others, we yield not the palm of scenic beauty to our rivals, and we envy not the encroachments of city life. Without wealth ourselves, we

have not yearly displayed before us the superfluities nor the pretensions of those who do have it.

But we must not wholly congratulate ourselves on our isolation. The great cities have not indeed added to us; alas! they have taken from us. There was a time—and the speaker recollects it—when such a country existence was an *entity*; something complete and self-sufficing. Never a manufacturing place (in the modern sense), there was a time when nearly all *our own* manufactories were here. We made our own clothes, our own carriages, built our own houses, made our own silverware; and repaired, at least, for ourselves, our clocks and watches.

These arts, exerted though they were on a humble scale, have nearly all fled. Who in our country towns can make a hat, or a man's garment of any kind, or a horse-shoe, or a harness, when the great manufactories, with concentrated "capital" and steam-driven "machinery," make them "in gross" for whole populations?

With our self-sufficiency and small mechanical avocations has gone, too, in no inconsiderable degree, our *intellectual life*. Before the great cities and manufacturing centres had absorbed all the energies of the people, each isolated township was a centre of intellectual life to itself. The driving away of energy and intellect to the cities, or to the broader fields of enterprise in the West, is by no means peculiar to Sheffield; but the effect has been more telling, since, for us, there have been few compensating influences. Massachusetts, more than any other State, perhaps, has devoted herself to the perfecting of education; yet it may well be doubted whether any of the "high schools" of this region surpass such as those of Mr. Curtis, in Stockbridge, or of Levi Gleason, in Lenox and Sheffield, of fifty years ago.

Before the days of railroads, the great turnpike route from Albany to Hartford lay through Sheffield, midway between those cities. Who is there whose memory reaches to those early years of the century, who does not recollect the daily passage of the stage-coaches? With us boys it was the great event of the day; the qualities of the various "teams" were warmly discussed; their "drivers" were among our heroes. Nor was it a matter of less interest to our grown population. Sheffield was the midday stopping-place in summer, the hostelry for night in the winter.

It is related of the celebrated French author, Chateaubriand, that, when in this country, he travelled by this route through Sheffield, and passed the night at the tavern, still, in somewhat altered form, standing. Before retiring, he took a place by the fireside, and casually entered into conversation with one who appeared to be a villager. Each soon discovered the other to be something more than an ordinary villager or an ordinary traveller. The conversation increased in interest—the legend makes it to have been *mathematical*!—became absorbing, and not till the

gray light of dawn stole in upon them, did either feel conscious that an entire night had been passed in this intellectual intercourse. Chateaubriand's interlocutor was Paul Dewey, uncle to our eminent and venerable townsman, Dr. Orville Dewey. I am sorry to say that I cannot verify, from Chateaubriand's published journals, that he ever passed over this Hartford and Albany route (though he did go to Albany); but the tale is of the class, "*se non é vero é ben trovato* : if not true, it is *truthlike*."

If, from these purely local views with which I have occupied your attention, we extend our vision over the nation of which we are a diminutive member, we should doubtless find, in its successive and noble struggles for national existence, and in the rapid strides of progress by which it has now taken rank among the foremost nations of the earth, great cause for self-congratulation.

The thirteen original colonies, whose narrow skirt of settlement barely fringed the Atlantic coast from Massachusetts Bay to the Savannah river, and whose population numbered less than four millions, have been the nursing mothers of thirty-eight States, whose territorial expanse reaches, without break of continuity, from the Atlantic to the Pacific; from the great lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Over this immense area a reticulation of seventy thousand miles of railways has been cast, auxiliary to which our great rivers have been spanned by bridge-structures, the very conception of which was not in the minds of men one hundred years ago; and even our own Hoosacs have, by cyclopean labor, been pierced to make a way for the "iron horse." The waters of the Atlantic have been united to those of the great lakes, and those again to the Mississippi. Thus have we put a double "girdle" of iron and of water around our by no means little "world," known as the United States of America—nay, a treble one; and though the last be but a diminutive wire, yet, like the nerve-system of the human body, it is the medium through which flashes intelligence, and which brings all parts of the system into harmonious action.

Regarded as the results of a century's growth of the nation, they are indeed marvellous. But *yet*, there is "a more excellent way" in which we may not have achieved so marked a progress, or in which, if marked at all, it may be feared our progress has been *re-gressive*.

"Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

It is by the greatness of our *men* that the true greatness of our nation must be judged—nay, by which even its *material* greatness will ultimately be determined. An eloquent writer* has well said: "In the perplexities of nations, in their struggles for existence, their impotence

* Ruskin, "Modern Painters."

or even their disorganization, they have higher hopes and nobler passions; out of suffering comes the serious mind; out of salvation, the grateful heart; out of endurance, fortitude; out of deliverance, faith. But when they have done away with violent and external sources of suffering, worse evils seem to arise out of their rest,—evils that vex less and mortify more; that suck the blood, though they do not shed it, and ossify the heart, though they do not torture it.”

During the hundred years which have elapsed, our nation has passed through *all* these ordeals. “Endurance” has developed our “fortitude;” “suffering,” the “serious mind;” and “salvation,” the “grateful heart.” Shall the doing away with violent and external sources of suffering develop, too, with us, those “worse evils” hinted at? Shall external prosperity, with its attendant love of luxury and ease, “suck the blood” of our purer affections, and “ossify” our hearts, that they no longer throb with noble and manly impulses?

The century which we inaugurate will be tasked with far other problems than those which tried the past one. And of those purely political, *the* most important will be that of maintaining good government—which implies the *distraining* of political corruption. No more difficult problem has fallen upon human beings, as civil communities enlarged themselves from mere tribes to mighty nations, than that of government. We Americans have grown up in—imbibed with our mother’s milk, I might say—the belief that republicanism is the most perfect (as, in application to a *great nation*, it is the latest) phase of human government. A monarchy, like yonder elm, to be stable and beneficent, must send its roots deep; must be grappled, *in* the soil where it stands, by multitudinous tendrils of personal reverence, the growth of a traditionary *past*. We, as a people, had no traditions, and no great families to members of which the people of these thirteen colonies could concede preëminence. A republic was not only congenial to the predilections and habits of mind of the colonists, but the sole form of government *practicable* for them. Indeed it may be said that, everywhere, men are outgrowing their traditions, and the habits of personal reverence, which sustain monarchies; and that a *new* monarchy can hardly originate again—at least, among highly civilized peoples.*

The perfecting of the republican form of government is, *therefore*, the great desideratum, not only for us, but for civilized mankind. No greater work of purely human political wisdom was ever produced, than the “Constitution of the United States.” Yet it may safely be affirmed

* A new *organization* or distribution, merely, by which a new monarchy is made (*e. g.*, Belgium) out of older ones, with recourse to existing reigning families, does not come in the category of “new monarchies” alluded to.

that, could the vision of its makers have been extended to the present day, the work would have taken, in some respects, a different form. It is, however, to be borne in mind that, in *one* important feature, the Constitution *has ever been a dead letter*. I allude to that which prescribes the manner of electing the President of the United States. It was not intended (and, *to me*, that is one of *the* indubitable proofs of the wisdom of its framers) that the chief magistrate should be elected *directly* by the people. It was for a certain number of "electors," appointed by the States (no senator or representative, or person holding any office of trust or profit under the United States, being eligible), "in such a manner as the *legislatures* thereof may direct," to make the choice. Nay, more; instead of reducing to insignificance the Vice-Presidency of the United States, the "electors" were to simply vote for "two persons." When these votes shall be counted "in the presence of the Senate," "the person having the greatest number of votes shall be the President;" the one having next to the greatest number, "Vice-President."

Nor does the "amendment" (whatever may have been in the minds of its framers), which specifies that the electors shall vote specifically for "President" and "Vice-President," affect the fundamental idea. To the electors it was given to *choose* of their own volition and wisdom, for these United States, the Chief Magistrate.

I care not to discuss the practicability of this method, remarking only that it leaves no place for the party "conventions" which effect, practically, for each party, a choice beforehand, and that, this idea carried into effect, the demoralizing notions of "spoils" and of "victors" would have been unknown. The inauguration of President would *not* have been the inauguration of a new quadrennial period of contest. Our "civil service" would not have become, as it now is, a part of the "spoils" of a political "victory."

We may not be able to restore that which, indeed, we never had: the constitutional method of election. What we *may* do, and what we *should* do, is to banish from politics the erroneous notions through which "rotation in office" is regarded as excellent and desirable in itself, and which makes "office" the prize of party predominance. We may place our civil service beyond the reach of this kind of *spoliation*, and free our country from the quadrennial anarchy of a Presidential election, while removing temptations to abuse of power, by proscribing, absolutely, a "second term."

We have assembled on this occasion especially for commemoration of our prospective adhesion to a "Declaration of Independence," to be made by the General Congress of the Colonies. In *that* declaration (as it soon after took form) the "king of Great Britain" was charged, among other things, with "taxing us without our consent," and with having

"refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good."

Now, one hundred years later, we have no "king of Great Britain" to arraign; but, when mooted questions, the settlement of which is vital to the public interest, are shunned by the political parties in power, and bandied to and fro, lest there should be a loss of party prestige, have we no like grievance? Taxes, indeed, cannot be imposed without "our consent," given through legislative bodies chosen by ourselves; or, at least, by a majority of all who, under a system of universal suffrage, have a right to vote; but I will leave it to your own conclusions whether this, our palladium from taxation "without our consent," has proved itself such.

Far as I am from being an optimist, I would not, on such an occasion as this, be a Cassandra. The calamities which Cassandra predicted, befell her people, *because* her vaticinations were disregarded. If the evils which portend at the close of the first century of our national existence, do not burst upon us in the next, it will be *because*, now deliberately recognized, they shall effectually be guarded against. And if our country shall continue its unparalleled course of prosperity and greatness, it will be because a free people rises to the dignity of that "perfect freedom," which for man is only found in *subjection*,—subjection to divine law—subjection to human law; recognizing that the boasted prerogative of "choosing our own rulers" is an imaginary benefit, unless it shall secure our being wisely ruled.

My task is finished. May that glorious orb, source of light, emblem of life, which shall soon sink below the mountain-ribbed horizon of our beautiful valley, amid, perhaps, portentous clouds, yet not wholly without "good omen," rise with the morrow's dawn upon *another* century, a "sun of righteousness with healing in his wings," shedding rays of beneficence upon the homes of a truly "free" people!

"**RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION; BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE.**"

APPENDIX

TO

GEN. BARNARD'S HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

[For the laborious examination of the records of the town of Sheffield, and the transcription therefrom of the portions read in his address, the writer is indebted to the gentleman to whose exertions the undertaking and successful accomplishment of the "Sheffield Centennial Celebration" was in so great a degree due—the Rev. Mason Noble.]

(1.) It may be that some part of the first church building is yet in existence, and could be identified. I have been able to trace its later history only as follows :

Mar. 14, 1764. "Ezra Fellows Ezra Hickock and Richard Jacobs were Chosen a Committee to dispose of the old meeting house for the Towns best advantage." They appear to have sold the building to Amos Kellogg, who seems to have been unwilling, or unable, to pay the price demanded, for we find these other items of record :—

Mar. 12, 1765—"voted to Reduce Amos Kelloggs obligation for the old meeting house Down to Twenty five pounds.

Oct. 12, 1876—"voted to Reduce Amos Kelloggs obligation or the Judgment obtained against S^d Kellogg at the Last Inferior Court of Common pleas Down to fifteen pounds"—Amos Kellogg died in 1770. Unless destroyed by fire, probably the timbers of the old church still exist in the frame of some dwelling-house or barn. [M. N., Jr.]

(2.) This date, Oct. 22, 1735, is rather that of the *recognition* of the church, than of its *organization*. On that day the first pastor was ordained by a council—"present the Rev^d Ministers and Messengers," viz. :

"Timothy Cohens of Litchfield, Deac. Nath^l Belden.

"Samuel Hopkins of Springfield.

"Peter Reynolds of Enfield, Capt. Joseph Sexton.

"Jonathan Edwards of Northampton, Deac. Samuel Alen.

"William Rand of Sunderland, Deac. Isaac Hubbard."

This was, doubtless, the occasion of the first visit of Samuel Hopkins and Jonathan Edwards to Berkshire. The above extract is from the "Proprietors' Book." The early records of the church are missing. In

1813, Rev. Mr. Bradford made diligent search for them, and concluded that they were "either lost or never made."—The following items are found upon the town records:—

Jan. 16, 1733, "Thomas Lee, Anthony Austin and Samuel Dewey "was chosen Tithingmen and Sworn.

Jan. 30, 1733, "Nath^l Austin was Chosen to Go and treat with m^r "Pumroy or Hire Some other Gentlemen to Preach to us for a time."

Mar. 12, 1734, "Joseph Noble Anthony Austin and Thomas Lee were "Chosen Tything Men and Sworn." (The election of Tything-men took place at every annual meeting, until within the memory of many now living.)

June 7, 1734, "voted to give m^r. Eben^e Devotion A Call to the work "of the ministrie In this Town—

"Mathew Noble Ezekiel Ashley and Philip Calender were Chosen a "Committee to Treat with m^r Devotion In order for Settling In the "work of the Ministrie"—

Oct. 18, 1734, "voted to allow m^r. Ebenezer Devotion fourteen "shillings to be paid to Elisha Noble for Keeping m^r. Devotions Horse "While he was Here." (Rev. Ebenezer Devotion, A. M., graduated at Yale College, in 1732; was afterward, I think, pastor of the church at Windham, Conn. He died in 1771. He was probably the first man to preach the Gospel in what is now Berkshire county.)

Oct. 18, 1734, the town voted to hire "m^r. Benjamin Pumroy" to preach for them six weeks. Dec. 29, they extended him a call. Mar. 17, 1735, they renewed the call, but in vain. June 26, 1735, they extended a call to "mr. Jonathan Hubbard," who accepted.

[M. N., Jr.]

(3.) This following is a transcript of the "remarkable" action or resolutions alluded to in the text, of January 12th, 1773.

In the following the record is transcribed, as nearly as possible, "*verbatim et literatim*." It will be perceived that the Scribe who made the entry, was unskilled. On the fifth of January, 1773, a Committee "to take into Consideration the Grievences which Americans in general and the Inhabitants of this province in particular labour under," was "Schozen, viz. Theodore Sedgwick, Dⁿ Silas Kellogg, Col^o Ashley, Doc^r Lem^l. Barnard, Mr. Aaron Root, Major John Fellows, Mr. Philip Callender, Capⁿ W^m Day, Deaⁿ Eben Smith, Capⁿ. Nath^l Austin & Capⁿ Stephen Dewey."—This Com^t reported Jan. 12, 1773—as follows—

"The Committee of this Town, Appointed to take into consideration the Greviances which Americans in general and the Inhabitants of this Province in particular labor under, and to make a Draught of such proceedings as they think are necessary for this Town in these critical circumstances to enter into, Report as follows, viz: that,

“This Town taking into there serious consideration and deeply lamenting the unhappy situation to which Americans in general and his Majestys most faithful subjects the Inhabitance of this Province in peticular are reduced, owing to the jealous Eye with which America hath been veiued by several british Administrations, since the Accesicon of his present most Greacious Magesty to the throne and viewing with the deepest Sorrow the Design of Great Britain (which is but too apparent to every Virtuons Lover of his Country) gradually to deprive us of invaluable Rights and previlidges, which were transmitted to us by our worthey and independent Ancestors at the most laborious and dangerous Expençe Should asteeem ourselves greatly wanting in the Duty we owe ourselves, our Country and posterity, Called upon us as we are by our Brethren, the respectable Town of Boston, should we neglect with the utmost Firmness and freedom to express the Sence we have of our present Dangerous Situation, always professing. as with Truth we do, the most emicolable Regard and Attachment to our most gracious Sovereign and protestant Succession as by Law established, we have with that Deference and Respect due to the Country on which we are and always hoped to be dependent, entered into the following Resolves, viz

Resolved that Mankind in a state of Nature are equal, free and independent of each Other, and have a right to the undisturbed Enjoyment of there lives, there Liberty and Property.

Resolved that the great end of political Society is to secure in a more effectual manner those Rights and previlidges wherewith God & Nature have made us free—

Resolved that it hath a tendency to subvert the good end for which Society was institued, to have in any part of the legislative Body an Interist seperate from and independent of the Interest of the people in general—

Resolved that affixing a Stipend to the Office of the Governer of the provence to be paid by money taken from the people without there consent creates in him an Intrest Seperate from and independent of the people in general—

Resolved that the peaceful Enjoyment of any preveliges to the people of this provence in a great measure (under God) depends upon the uprightness of and independency of the Exective Officers in general, and of the Judges of the Superior Court in peticular—

Resolved that if Salleries are affixed to the office of the Judges of the superior Court rendering them independent of the people and dependent on the Crown for there support (which we have too much Reson to think is the Case) it is a preecedent that may hereafter, conceeding the Depravity of human Nature, be improved to purposes big with the most Obvious and fatal consequences to the good people of this province—

Resolved that Americans in general (and his Magestes Subjects the Inhabitants of this Province in perticular, by there Charter) are intituled to all the Liberties, Priviledges and Immunities of natural born british Subjects—

Resolved That it is a well-known and undoubted priviledge of the british Constitution that every Subject hath not only a Right to the free and uncontroled injoyment use and Improvement of his estat or property so long as he shall continue in the possession of it, but that he shall not in any maner be deprived there of in the whool or in part untill his consent geven by himself or his Representative hath been previously for that purpos expresly obtained—

Resolved that the late acts of the parlement of Great Breton expresporpos of Rating and regulating the colecting a Renewal in the Colonies: are unconstitutional as thereby the Just earning of our labours and Industry without Any Regard to our own consent are by mere power revished from us and un limited power by said acts and commisions put into the hands of Ministeral hirelings are the Deprivation of our inestimable and constitutional priviledge, a Trial by Jury, the determanation of our property by a single Judge paid by one party by Money illegally taken from the other for that purpos, and the insulting Diference made between british and American Subjects are matters truly greavious and clearly evince a Disposition to Rule us with the Iron Rod of Power—

Resolved that the interduction of civil Officers unknown in the Charter of this Province with powers which Render Property, Domestic Security and Enjoyment of the Inhabitance altogether Insecure are a very great greavence.

Resolved that it is the Right of every subject of Great Breton to be tried by his peers of the vicinity, when charged with any crime, that any act of the parliment of Great Breatain for Distroying this priviledge and tearing away Subjects from there Connections, Friends, Business and the possibility of evincing there Innocence, and carring them on bare Suspicion to the Distance of Thousands of Miles for a trial is an troble Grevance. [This is nearly as it is written. It is evident the person who entered these minutes into the town records, did not understand the purport, or else was very careless.]

Resolved That the Great and general Coart of this Province have it in there power in consequence of Instrutions from the Ministry only, too exempt any Man or Body of Men residing within and Receiving Protection from the Laws of this Province from contrebuting there equal Proportion to wards the Support of Government within the same nor can any such instrections or orders from the Ministry of Great Breton Justify Such Proceedings [for] should this be the Case it will follow of consequence that the whole Province Tax may Be laid and one or more persons as shall Best suit with the Caprice of the Ministry—

Resolved that any Determination or adjudication of the King in Council with Regard to the Limits of Provinces in America, where by Private Property is or may [be] affected, is a great grevence already very severely felt by Great Numbers, who after purchasing Lands of the Only Persons whome they would sopose had any Right to Convey have on a sudding, by such an adjudication been deprived of there whole Property and from a state of affluance reduced to a state of Beggary

Resolved That the great and general Coart of this Province can constitutionly make any Laws or Regulations, Obligatory upon the inhabbitance there of residing with in the Same—

Voted That the Town Clark duly Record the prosedings of This Meeting, and Make a true and attested Copy There of as soon as may be and forward the same to David Ingersole Jun^r Esqr, The Representative of This Town, at the great and general Court at Boston who is hereby Requested to consider the above Resolves as the Sence of his Constitu acts, [sic] the Town of Sheffield and to the — centituonal Menes [sic] in his Power that the Greaviances complained of may be redressed, and where as the Province of New York, by the most unjustifiable Prosedings have by a late act of there general Assembly extended the Limits of the County of Albany East as far as Conneticnt River, and under pertence of having by that act the legual Jurisdiction with in that part of this province, by Said Act included within The County of Albany have exercised Actual jurisdiction, and the officers of the County of Albany without the least pretence of any Presept from the Orthoity On this side the Line, by Colour of a warrant, executed in that County upon suspison that a man had been guilty of a erime in this County, taken him and carried him to Albany for examination in Inditement crimes have been tryed, to have been cometted at Sheffield in the County of Albany, Mr. Engersell is here by requested to use his Utmost Influence that the Alarming consequences from such proceedings dreaded, may be prevented & That the Fears of the people may be quieted by a speedy Determanation of that unhappy controversy And where as it hath been reported that the support given by the great and general Court to the Judges of the Superior Court hath been in addaquate to the service performed, Mr. Engersoll is here by requested that (if this Report shall appear to be founded in truth) he use his Influence Saleries may augmented, to such a sum as shall be sufficient to support the Dignity of the office

Theodore Sedgwick pe Ord

Which being twice Reade distinctly It was put to Vote paragraph by paragraph Whether the town would Accept of Such a Report it pased in the affirmative Nemine Contradicente.—

(4.) The first "Town Meeting" in Sheffield was held at the house "Mr

obadiah Noble" Jan. 16, 1733. The following is the record of the meeting :

"voted mathew Noble Chosen moderator

"voted at the Same meeting Hezekiah Noble Chosen Town Clerk and
"sworn

"voted at Same meeting John Smith Philip Calender and Daniel Kellogg
"was chosen Selectmen

"voted at the meeting & Daniel Kellogg was chosen Town Treasurer and
"Sworn

"voted at the Same meeting and Joseph Taylor and Elisha Noble was
"Chosen Constables and Sworn

"voted at the Same meeting Thomas Lee Anthony Austin and Samuel
"Dewey was Chosen Tithing men and Sworn

"voted at the Same meeting Nathaniel Austin and obadiah Noble was
"Chosen fenceviewers and Sworn

"voted at the Same meeting and Jonathan Root was Chosen Sirveyer
"and Sworn"—

[The names of Taylor and Root are not now found upon our lists of voters. The other names still continue with us. M. N., Jr.]

(5.) These interesting rolls are furnished by Mr. Thomas Austin, of Erie, Penna.

"The following is a return of MINUTE MEN in the Third Company in the First Regiment in the county of Berkshire July 11, 1776.

(Signed) ABNER CALLENDER,
Clerk.

Serg^t. Nathaniel Callender
Corp^l. Solomon Triscot
Joseph Callender
Joseph Church
Samuel Triscot, jr.
David Callender
Seth Triscot
Elijah Bacens
David Keys

Jonathan Spalding
Zebulon Spalding
Samuel Warn
Jacob Warn
Benajah Orent
Amos Gill
Ebenezer Jones
David Dunham, jr.

"Roll of Lieut. Enoch Noble's" Comp., in Colo. Mark Hopkins Regiment of Foot Being the first Regiment in the County of Berkshire.

Dated

Sheffield, June 13, A. D. 1776.

Lieut^t Enoch Noble
" Jeremiah Hickock
Serg^t Anthony Austin
" Anthony Goodspied

" Benjamin Cowle, jr^r
" Jasper Saxton
Clerk Joseph Kingman
Corp^l Joseph Goodrich

Corpl.	Amos Eldridge	<i>Privates.</i>	Zachariah Noble
"	Ebenezer Kellogg	"	Silas Marvin
"	Elisha Smith	"	John Fellows
Drummer.	Irie Beach	"	Benjamin Bush
Fifer.	Darius Butler	"	Benjamin Fuller
<i>Privates.</i>	Samuel Bush	"	Nathaniel Downing
"	Ephraim Kellogg	"	Noah Hubbard
"	Joseph Cook	"	Joseph Steele
"	David Hickock	"	Ebenezer Smith, jr.
"	Paul Dewey	"	Elias Hopkins
"	John Austin	"	Jonathan Parkes
"	Obadiah Bush	"	Benjamin Spalding
"	Joseph Seeger	"	Dan Raymond
"	David Walker	"	Samuel Kinsman
"	Nathanial Westover	"	William Bement
"	Aaron Fairchild	"	Aaron Root, jr.
"	Elijah Austin	"	Tho ^s Hart
"	Joel Kellogg	"	Silvester Barnard
"	Ephraim Case	"	Timothy Hubbard
"	Augustine Austin	"	Thomas Halten
"	Gideon Kellogg	"	Samuel Shears
"	Whiting Sheldon	"	John Obryn
"	Nathanial Cowle	"	Mathew Noble
"	Benjamin Bramin	"	Aaron Miller
"	Ezekiel Noble	"	Abner Ashley
"	John Cotten	"	Joseph Churchel
"	Joshua Boardman	"	Ruben Jackson
"	Joseph Taylor	"	Aaron Hubbard
"	Joseph Corben	"	Roger Noble
"	William Johnson	"	Jeremiah Fox
"	William McGachy		

25 Guns, 3 with Bayonets. Every man had Wadding.

Third Company of Foot in the First Regiment County of Berkshire,
July 11, 1776.

Cap ^t .	Roswell Downing	(Privates)	Job Westover
Lieu ^t .	Elisha Ensign	"	Zacheus Spalding
"	Theophilus Spalding	"	Shubel Warring
Clerk.	Abner Callender	"	James Linzey
Serg ^t .	Comfort Callender	"	Samuel Bibbins
"	John Hubbell	"	Noah Westover
"	Joab Austin	"	Johnathan Nicals
Corpl	Sam ^l Joslin	"	Samuel Hatch
"	Stephen Tuttle	"	William Roach
"	William Stephens	"	Henry Keys
(Privates)		"	Jeremiah Dunham
"	William Day, jr.	"	John Westover
"	David Ferry	"	Aaron Taylor
"	Moses Eggleston	"	Zadock Loomis
"	Joshua Lebaron	"	Enos Kellogg

(Privates) David Clark, jr.	“ Nehemiah Kellogg.
“ Moses Westover	—
“ Peter Noble	23 Guns
“ Solomon Noble	5 Bayonets
“ John Nichols	16 Blankets
“ Asa Kellogg	4¾ lbs Powder
“ Daniel Taylor	220 Balls
“ Daniel Pattin	30 Flints
“ Philip Callender, jr.	8 Knapsacks
“ Aron Slate	19 Horns
“ Linze Joslin	8 Priming Wires
“ Jesse Hoocker	6 Brushes
“ Elisha Ensign, jr.	[M. N., Jr.]

(6.) [Perhaps as notable an example of the general use of ardent spirits, and as early a conception of the dangers of such use, as can be found anywhere, is given in these extracts from the Sheffield town-records.

May 22, 1735—“ voted to Set the meeting House on a Certain Nole of
 “Land Easterly of Mr William Goodriches Dwelling House which is In
 “the Street or Highway
 “at the same meeting voted to allow three Barrels of Good Beare towards
 “or for the Raising of the meeting house
 “at the same meeting voted to allow twenty Gallons of Rumb towards
 “or for the Raising of the meeting house or for the town use
 “at the same meeting voted to allow twenty pounds of Suger to go with
 “the Rumb
 “at the same meeting Obadiah Noble and Ensign Ashley ware made
 “choice of to Dool out Drink to the labourers when it is convenient
 “and Likewiss to Sell Drink to Strangers or towns People and also to
 “Recieve the money likewiss Ensign Ashley to Serve as Pinman
 “at the same meeting voted to allow no Drink to the Labourers after
 “they are Dismist from Labour
 “at the Same meeting voted to fine all persons that are Delinquent, viz
 “Such Persons as are Capable or Servisable In Raising of the meeting
 “House on the Days Here after mentioned the Sum of ten shillings a
 “Day for Each Defolt.”

Such were the regulations adopted and preparations made “for the Raising of the meeting house.” These men are not to be judged by our standard. There was not the same moral delinquency shown in this action of theirs that is seen in the use of “grab bags,” and “guess cakes,” and “raffles,” so common at the present day, for these things are known to be wrong, and are forbidden by law.

The other extract is forty-two years later, March 11, 1777.

“Voted that no Person shall Sell Spirituous Liquors without liberty from the Selectmen and Committee of Inspection also that they Inspect Licenced houses——”

M. N., Jr.]





JAN. 69

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